NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Department of Toxic Substances Control
Site Mitigation and Brownfields Reuse Program
Office of Military Facilities, Northern California Operation
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, CA 95826

Subject: ☒ DRAFT ☐ FINAL ☐ MITIGATED

Project Title: **Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, Former Honey Lake Demolition Range – Dry Lake Area, Sierra Army Depot, Final**

State Clearinghouse No.:

Project Location: The 4,485-acre Dry Lake Area of the Former Honey Lake Demolition Range (situated in the northwest region of the Sierra Army Depot) is northwest of the unincorporated community of Herlong in the Honey Lake area of Lassen County, California, approximately 40 miles southeast of Susanville, California and 55 miles northwest of Reno, Nevada.

County: Lassen

Project Description: The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has prepared an Initial Study to consider the approval of the Preliminary Final Former Honey Lake Demolition Range –Dry Lake Area Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA). The proposed remedial actions will be conducted in compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liabilities Act (CERCLA), the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), and chapter 6.8, division 20, of the California Health and Safety Code.

The actions to be taken at this site are defined as a "project" according to the Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21065, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378. This project is subject to the environmental review process by the lead agency (DTSC) as defined the PRC Section 21080 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15063. The environmental review documents for this project have been prepared in accordance with these CEQA requirements.

The actions to be taken at the Former Honey Lake Demolition Range –Dry Lake Area are intended to investigate and remediate the surface and subsurface environment of potential hazards posed by Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) to a level that does not pose a significant health risk for the intended future use of the property. The proposed actions are intended to be the final remedy for this area. In order to facilitate the transfer of ownership of the Dry Lake Area parcel as open space from the United States government to the California State Lands Commission, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Removal of MEC. Where appropriate, soil sifting technologies, such as dig and haul or methods that perform digging and sifting as a single process, will be used. The depth of excavation will be pre-determined based on investigation findings.
- Treatment, by detonation in place, of MEC items that are too dangerous to move;
- MEC items that are safe to move will be temporarily stored on-site in a secured explosives magazine. At the completion of the project, items containing explosive residues will be transported (in the secured explosive magazines with establishment of a public safety exclusion zone) to an approved off-site treatment and disposal facility;
- Uncontaminated scrap metal will be transferred to a metal recycling facility;
- Prepare a report that will document the results of the clean-up activities, and;
- Implement Institutional Controls (ICs), such as land use restrictions, informational displays, and education programs to help minimize the possibility of future encounters with ordnance related materials.

The activities necessary to complete the action are expected to take between three and six months, and are anticipated to begin after the water recedes and the lake bed is dry enough to allow access for equipment and field personnel. Project activities are anticipated to be completed within approximately two years.

Site History

The 4,486 acre Dry Lake Area of the Former Honey Lake Demolition Range (situated in the northwest region of the Sierra Army Depot (SIAD)) is northwest of the unincorporated community of Herlong in the Honey Lake area of Lassen County. The Dry Lake Area is approximately 40 miles southeast of Susanville, and 55 miles northeast of Reno, Nevada.

Honey Lake is an intermittent body of water, comprising approximately 60,000 acres, whose status depends upon the amount of rain and snow fall over the course of several years. During periods of ample precipitation, the lake contains water with an average depth of approximately three feet. When there are periods of low rain and snow fall, the lake dries, exposing the lake bed. The area is currently inundated with water.

SIAD conducted demolition and burning of excess, unserviceable, and/or obsolete munitions following World War II. The first documented demolition activity on the dry Honey Lake bed occurred in 1945. Use of the lake bed for demolition and burning continued into the 1950's, possibly as late as 1958. Items to be destroyed were stacked together on the lake bed, explosive charges were attached to the munitions, and the items were detonated. The resulting explosion resulted in the destruction of the waste munitions, and the creation of large amounts of scrap metal that have been "kicked out" onto the lake bed and areas bordering the east shore of the lake (East Shore Area). However, some items may not have been destroyed entirely, and partially destroyed munitions and scrap metal containing residues of explosive material have been created as a result. It is possible that some items have not been destroyed at all. An exact inventory of items destroyed on the bed of Honey Lake is not available, but items are known to range from 20 millimeter ammunition to 2,000 pound general purpose bombs. The area of the lake bed impacted by former demolition activities, including the "kick out" of material, covers an area of approximately 4,486 acres. Approximately half of that area is contaminated with MEC wastes.

The Dry Lake Area has been divided into three sectors based on the investigation findings and are described as follows: the Open Burn/Open Detonation (OB/OD) Sector where open burn and open detonation activities have resulted in extensive contamination; the Buffer Sector where limited, shallow "kick-out" MEC items were found, and the Periphery Sector where only scrap metal was found.

Open Burn/Open Detonation (OB/OD) Sector: The main OB/OD Sector occupies 1,726 acres in the central portion of the Dry Lake Area. Additionally, there is one, 11-acre non-contiguous area immediately west of the main OB/OD Sector that is considered part of the OB/OD Sector. These two parcels bring the total acreage of the OB/OD Sector to 1,737 acres. This sector was identified as containing a large number of disposal pits based on data from the airborne geophysical mapping survey and was found to contain a high density of Discarded Military Munitions (DMM) and Munitions Debris (MD)-related items by the land-based geophysical survey and intrusive sampling.
Buffer Sector: The Buffer Sector occupies 756 acres of the Dry Lake Area and surrounds the OB/OD Sector on three sides. This sector was identified as containing DMM and MD items that are believed to have been "kicked-out" from the demolition pits associated with the OB/OD Sector.
Periphery Sector: The Periphery Sector occupies 1,993 acres of the Dry Lake Area and borders three sides of the Buffer Sector. This sector was identified as an additional "buffer" between the area known to be contaminated with DMM and the clean area on Honey Lake transferred to the Honey Lake Conservation Team (HLCT.

Recommended Remedial Action

Dry Lake Area: Institutional Controls (ICs) will be implemented for all sectors in the Dry Lake Area. The ICs will include informational display cases, community awareness/education, informational pamphlets, and a Land Use Covenant to restrict future land use. Additionally, 5-year reviews will be conducted for the Dry Lake Area to ensure that the munitions response actions implemented at the Dry Lake Area remain effective in the protection of human health and safety and the environment.

OB/OD Sector: For the 1,737 acres OB/OD Sector the remedy selected for a munitions response is the subsurface removal of MEC to 1-foot below ground surface (bgs). This remedial action will remove those MEC items that could be accessed by individuals that visit the site, therefore providing a substantial level of protection of public health and the environment. Finally, this remedy will physically remove remaining MEC hazards that might be accessible to the public under an open space land use. However, no MEC removal based on aboveground-deployed detection methods can be 100% effective in removing all MEC at this site; therefore, should intrusive activities be necessary below the one (1)-foot clearance depth, such activities will be conducted under construction support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The final remedy for this sector will include ICs (see discussion above) that are considered sufficiently protective of the public and the environment. There were 131 acres within the OB/OD Sector that fell outside of the boundary of the TCRA conducted in 2003. A separate surface removal of MEC will not be conducted because surface MEC in this area will be removed during the implementation of the remedy of subsurface removal of MEC to 1-foot bgs.

Buffer Sector: A surface removal of MEC remedy will be implemented over the 756 acre Buffer Sector. Surface Removal of MEC comprises locating and removing ordnance from the ground. Teams of unexploded ordnance (UXO)-qualified personnel use visual identification to search for and remove ordnance. The surface removal would be conducted by establishing a system of grids within which a series of sweep lanes would be placed. These lanes are typically 5 feet in width or narrower. MEC recovered during the surface removal would be detonated in place if it were not safe to move to an on-site area specifically designated for destruction of recovered MEC items. Surface removal of MEC and the detonation of MEC would occur within exclusion zones, which vary in size, depending on the maximum fragmentation range of the MEC items recovered. MD recovered during the surface clearance would be turned in to the nearest Defense Reutilization Marketing Office (DRMO), or taken off site and turned in to an authorized scrap metal recycler. The final remedy for this sector will include ICs (see discussion above) that are considered sufficiently protective of the public and the environment.

Periphery Sector: This sector is considered to have a "lower" MEC hazard due to the possibility that the area could be accessed by the general public when the lake bed is dry. The final remedy for this sector will include ICs (see discussion above) that are considered sufficiently protective of the public and the environment.

Finding Of Significant Effect On Environment: ***(An Initial Study supporting this finding is attached.)***

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has prepared an Initial Study pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Section 21000 et seq., California Public Resources Code) and implementing Guideline (Section 15000 et seq., Title 14, California Code of Regulations). Based upon this analysis, DTSC has determined that the proposed project will not have a significant effect upon the environment.

Mitigation Measures: DTSC has determined that the project does not require any mitigation measures beyond those incorporated as part of the project description.

Branch Chief Signature		Date
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